

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier University



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February 2, 1996
07-96

Harris government to be put "on trial" at WLU teach-in

The budget-slashing government of Premier Mike Harris will be the subject of a mock trial during a teach-in at Wilfrid Laurier University on Thursday, February 8.

The teach-in, called "Dismantling the Welfare State: What Will Become Of Us?", is being put on because "we want people to understand why these cuts are happening now, their broader context in relation to global capitalism, and what their impact will be on vulnerable people," said Dr. Anne Westhues of Laurier's Faculty of Social Work.

Numerous speakers will participate in the teach-in, which will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in WLU's Paul Martin Centre. From 9 to 10:30, Neil Brooks, a professor of law at Osgoode Hall at York University, and Carolyn Egan, an activist, feminist, member of the Steelworkers union and member of the Anti-cutbacks Campaign in Toronto, will talk about Globalization, Free Trade, and the Deficit.

From 10:45 to noon, the Harris government will be "on trial". "Witnesses" representing students, women and children, welfare recipients, the health care and mental health care system, and ethnic minorities will testify before a "judge" and "jury". Representing the education system will be Dr. Joyce Lorimer, a WLU history professor who is also president of the Canadian Association of University Teachers.

Following a lunch break, a panel will convene at 1 p.m. to discuss solutions and strategies for dealing with government cutbacks. The audience will break into groups to discuss strategies from 2:30 to 3:30, with feedback and a plenary from 3:30 to 4:00 to discuss effective strategies for dealing with cutbacks and a possible role for WLU.

The teach-in is being sponsored by the Faculty of Social Work, a WLU interdisciplinary group called Critical Perspectives Seminars, the Instructional Development Department, and the Graduate Student Association.